If Jacob were existing now, he would claim as his the fruits of the conception of the greater portion of the architectural flock; for they have peeled rods ever before their eyes in all directions, and their progeny is ring-straked, speckled, and spotted; or, adopting poetical metaphor,—

"'Tis Gothic cut on Greek and Latin,
Like fustian heretofore on satin."

The only chance, therefore, for the new stylers to attain success, is to get a grant of some out-of-the-way island; there beget sons and daughters; duly instill into their youthful minds wondrous notions of the greatness of old mother England, and of her glorious architectural medleys; and after these feelings have worked some two or three hundred years, a stray steamer or a wandering balloon will make a grand discovery, and astonish the world by reports of the new style, which these long-lost islanders had worked out for themselves.

But if we cannot be the originators of a new style, that is no reason why we are to be servile copyists of the old ones, working in the spirit of the Chinese tailor, who made a vest so exactly to pattern, that he copied all the holes and tatters of the original: that course can never gain us honour. The literary men of the day do not want to invent a new language, in order the better to express their ideas. If the ideas are worth anything, it matters not that the language expressing them is an old one, provided that it be used perspicuously and harmoniously. It is *great original thoughts* that are needed in architecture, with such knowledge of the style used as to be capable of employing it consistently and gracefully to clothe these thoughts, a knowledge which can only be acquired by the most intimate acquaintance with *the causes* and *principles* which led to the glorious results we admire. No man would ever acquire elegance of diction, or reach of thought, by employing his years in copying ancient alphabets; and an architect is as little likely to produce original works, if he confine his studies to details, or hold himself bound to conventional forms, a course which can only cramp his genius, and will never elevate it—a course which will degrade him from a man into a machine—make a puppet of him, with cunning men pulling the strings. J. E.

THE GAS MOVEMENT.

Your attention and observation on the "Gas Movement" through the years 1847 and 1848 were of immense benefit to the public at large. They were the enforcing prelude to a better state of things: yet the evils attendant upon the existing monopolies are of an outrageous character, and continue to merit your admonishing spirit, towards an acceleration of increased consumption, which practically involves a beneficial reduction in price.

The abortive attempt on the part of the Great Central Gas Consumers' Company last session to obtain an Act, has not only served to bring them again into the field with redoubled energy and increased virtue, but has served to depress the terms of those companies who, prodigal of their age and importance, gravely declared by advertisement that there could be no reduction in their charge, which through philanthropy had long been placed on a minimum basis, and then scarcely yielded a remunerative profit. But as "coming events cast their shadows before," so the dread of competition has enlarged their philanthropy, and already produced, and will continue to produce, vast saving to the citizens of the metropolis, and in degree extend its benign influence to the provinces. In this town (Nottingham) great abatements have been made, notwithstanding the allegations before a Committee of the House of Commons that the prices were reduced to the lowest possible figure to secure bare interest to the shareholders. "The pressure from without," however, has already led to reductions, and the like cause will operate to further beneficial effect. But do not, Mr. Editor, let these advantages enervate your wonted activity, but give to the country at large, in your future numbers, the germs of the evidence now being laid before the honourable Committee on the "Great Central Gas Consumers' Bill," as to the desirableness of extended supply, the advancement of science in its purification, economy in its manufacture, and the vast immunities arising to the consumer from the operation of free trade in the consumption of coal gas. C. H.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

With reference to the letter of "C. H.," and while thanking him for the encouraging terms in which he is pleased to speak of our efforts in this good cause, we may remark that, although it has never been our intention to go 'off guard' altogether, or be anything but watchful of the progress of this movement, and although our task has been but a thankless one, except in the all-sufficient consciousness of having done our duty to the public, and to the gas companies themselves, whose best interests we have promoted, in our advocacy of the extension of "cheap and good gas;" still having already passed this watchword into the mouths of the public at large, we think it high time for a publication such as this is, to leave that public now to look after these, their own self-interests, in which their own attention has already been vividly and no doubt permanently engaged. And THE BUILDER may well be admitted to have already done its duty, seeing that it has not only laid this powerful movement on the stocks, and built it into shape, but lent a willing hand to smooth its launch-ways, and to shove it onward into the broad sheet of the daily press—its proper element, and where it has already met with those fair winds of public favour with which its sails are now filled, so that truly it is now (or ought to be) beyond the influence of our own mere individual arm. Nevertheless, we cannot pretend to have lost all further interest in its welfare, but still mean to report its progress briefly whenever it may seem desirable so to do.——In the success of the Great Central Gas Consumers' Company our metropolitan, and even our provincial readers, may feel interested. It has already been the instrumental means of reducing the price of gas in the city of London down to 4s. a 1,000 cubic feet,—a reduction equivalent, as Mr. Pearson recently remarked, to 50,000*l.* a-year. A more triumphant exoneration of our confident assurances of old—in the face of alleged impossibilities in the way of a reduction from 7s. and 8s. a 1,000—that the half of it was a remunerative price,—cannot well be conceived, and stamps our whole argument with the involuntary but invaluable evidence of the monopolists themselves in its favour. As to the quality of the article to be henceforth supplied at the reduced rate, we have already noted that the companies will soon find out that their great field of profit in extension lies in the domestic use of gas—an immense field scarcely yet broached either in the metropolis or in the provinces,—and moreover that they dare not and *cannot* enter on that field *without the purest article*. Self interest, therefore, will *compel* the *cheap* gas to be *good*. This we have all along seen. The argument of the Western or Cannel Coal Company, therefore, is a lame one. Yet, as we long since also noted, the introduction of cannel coal cannot but militate towards the improvement of the quality of the gas used. But there must be no humbug or obfuscation on the subject of our own old watchword "cheap and good gas light." What we have had hitherto to do with, has been both *dear* and *bad*, but it does not follow that the cheap must *necessarily* be also bad: we have clearly anticipated quite the contrary. And besides, why cannel coal gas should be so much dearer than other gas, merely because it is easily made purer, out of coal a little dearer, we cannot see. The price of coal, however high, has been proved—and, indeed, admitted—to be but a very secondary consideration in fixing the lowest possible price of gas; and besides, if we mistake not, cannel coal yields it far more abundantly—more profusely—than common. Used, as we have had it in the north, for domestic fuel, it is constantly pouring forth volumes of gas, almost ready made as it were, and leaping into life spontaneously, flowing like inexhaustible jets into a clear-burning, cheerful, and beautiful fire. The carriage of coal itself by rail is likely to prove but a nominal one, if it be true that immense quantities are to be poured into the metropolis from Wigan, at 1d. a ton But, even taking the superior purity of the cannel coal gas at the Western Company's own valuation, 8s. a thousand feet, is *not* merely, or only, equivalent to the price now charged in the City, far less cheaper, that price being now but 4s.; so that 1,750 feet, which they allege is required to give light equal to 1,000 of their own, does not now, within the City at least, cost so much as 8s., the price of theirs. But enough of this for the present: we have all along been inclined to look favourably on this company's endeavours, but they must come down with their 8s. to a much more reasonable standard,—ay, and give us their gas, too, as pure as they promise, or, it may be, as they already prepare it.——We are keeping our eye on the Commons' Committee on the Great Central Consumers' Company, and will have a brief review of the evidence and proceedings before it to lay before our readers at its close.——The Chester Gas Company, says *Feliz Farley*, offered to light the Chester Railway station for 4s. 6d. per 1,000 cubic feet. This not meeting the views of the railway companies, they now manufacture their own gas at 2s. per 1,000 cubic feet.——The Leicester gas consumers are in the midst of the movement, having called on their local gas company to reduce the price of their gas to 4s. The directors, according to the *Leicester Journal*, intend to accede, to some extent, to the call for a reduction.——At the last half-yearly meeting of the Lincoln Company, the usual dividend of 10 per cent. was declared. "A large outlay," says the local *Times*, "is about to be incurred for new mains; but this outlay will be met out of savings, without touching the dividend of 10 per cent. The gas company is the most flourishing joint-stock company in Lincoln. Two 25*l.* shares were sold by Mr. Bowden, the other day, one at 47*l.* and the other at 43*l.*,—the purchasers to pay all expense of conveyance."——At Stockport the gas consumers have been astir of late to obtain a reduction from 6s. to 4s. 6d.——The Southport gas—made with resin and water—is said to "burn brilliantly, and to excel the Manchester gas, in illuminating power, by 26½ per cent., and that of Salford by 20½ per cent., containing neither sulphur nor ammonia, while as far as expense of materials is concerned, the gas may be said to be put into the gasometer free, the residual products paying for the materials employed."——Dr. Gesner, of New York, believes that he can light that city with gas made with Trinidad asphaltum, at a cost of 50 cents. per 1,000 feet.

BUILDERS' BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION.

It is scarcely necessary for us to call the attention of our readers to the anniversary dinner, advertised to take place at the London Tavern, on the 4th June next, Mr. W. Cubitt M.P., in the chair, in aid of the funds of the Builders' Benevolent Institution: the long and influential list of stewards will of itself do this. The society was not established till July, 1847. It has now five pensioners on its funds; another election will be made in October next: and it has 1,600*l.* 3 per cent. Consols, a balance at the bankers', and no debts.

The ball at Willis's Rooms, of which we gave an account, realized, after paying all expenses, 120*l.* 10s., which sum has been paid to the charity by the honorary secretary, Mr. Joseph Bird, to whose exertions the charity is much indebted. Tickets for the dinner may be had of Mr. George Bird, the treasurer.

We gave our strenuous aid to the society when it needed it, and have reason to believe contributed to its success. We feel, therefore, more than common interest in its future progress.

A VIEW OF THE BRITANNIA TUBULAR BRIDGE.—A view of this wonderful work, as it will appear when completed, the view taken on the spot and the details from the working drawings, has been produced in the latest style of treble-tinted lithography, by Mr. George Hawkins, and is now published.* The size of the print is 2*e* in. by 15 in., and it is beautifully executed. Such of our readers as desire a memorial of Mr. Stephenson's great work will find this just what they want.

* 110, Camden-road villas, Camden Town, or Messrs. Day and Son, Gate-street, Lincoln's-inn-fields.

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